



**The main hall and dining area of the new center. The building is designed to be multi-**

**purpose with craft rooms, entertainment area and a large kitchen.**

## New Senior Center in Batesburg-Leesville

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Flags, balloons, red, white and blue ribbons, speeches and politicians. It was not a stump meeting though. It was the grand opening of the Lexington County Recreation and Aging Commission's Batesburg-Leesville Senior Center. Mother Nature was smiling on the occasion with sunshine and gentle breezes. It was a day many had waited on for years.

Lexington County Councilman Billy Derick, Senators Nicki Setzler and Jake Knotts, Andre Bauer's office and Mayor Jim Witzowaty echoed their commitment to senior care and enrichment in the county.

Ms. Judy Wingate, a member of the classic singers, gave a crowd pleasing rendition of the National Anthem. Willie Mae Adger and Clabbie Edmond, two of the Centers longest participating members, cut the ribbon and the festivities began.

The dining area was decorated in red, white and blue. The tables were covered with white table clothes and sprinkled with multicolored confetti and patriotic cross stitch holiday ornaments and an American flag on each table. There was a selection of finger food and punch. The serving table center piece was made up of red, white and blue carnations and ribbons. The pride of the staff and Center patrons was shared by all. Many were misty eyed as the place was buzzing with folks hugging and reminiscing about the growth that had taken place made over the last twenty years.

The Senior Center itself is located at 241 Highland Ave. across the parking lot of the present Recreational Center allowing the two to share parking facilities. The building is 5,100 square feet. The location is on a little knoll surrounded by soccer fields and residential areas.

The Senior Center has a very large dining room, a craft room with a sewing machine and lots of storage space for supplies. There is a separate sitting room with sofas, chairs and game tables. Many of the jigsaw puzzles that have been assembled by the seniors have been mounted and hung on the wall as artwork. The facility is awash with daylight flooding in from the many windows especially in the craft room. There are two offices located off the main foyer leading into the dining room.

The highlight of the facility is the state of the art kitchen. It just gleams with new stainless steel. This kitchen will serve as the center piece of the whole operation and will facilitate the Meals on Wheels food program to grow and will allow B-L Senior Center to be a designated facility for the Frozen Meal Program. This is an outstanding program that already exists at the Tri-City Leisure Center in West Columbia. Larry Thomas who coordinates the Meals on Wheels will also now add the Frozen Food Program to his list of responsibilities. Mary Johnson will be offering creative guidance in crafts and filling in with other areas as needed.

Linda Christison, Director of Council on Aging, was able to take some time to explain a little about the financing for the center. Ms. Christison worked in California for sixteen years managing similar centers and that she "likes being part of doing things that make people's lives better."

Last, but certainly not least, was the pride that shown on the face of Senior Center Director Jackie Head's face. She has held this position for twelve years and so obviously was born to this calling. She wants the readers to know that they are always in great need of volunteers for the Meals on Wheels and in other capacities. The Center is now serving its second generation of seniors and



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actually has a father and son who now are attending the center together.

She and the whole staff are excited about the Frozen Meal Program because it gives them the opportunity to bring meals once a week to clients in very rural settings. The meals will be delivered to them once a week to be kept frozen and the clients can thaw them out on a daily basis. The deliveries of these meals allow the rural seniors to receive a visit and also supplemental items such as milk, fruit, breads and sweets.

Currently an average of 75 meals a day are delivered with an additional fifty plus clients enjoying lunch in the dining room. The Frozen Meal Program will also serve at least 25 clients from Swansea and 20 plus clients from Pelion.

These Senior Centers serve as a clearing

house for services and are an information resource.

The new facility has a lovely piano donated to them so if you would like to spend some time tickling the ivories contact Jackie at 532-4536 and give a few hours a month to truly enrich someone else's life.

There are currently seven centers in Lexington County and they are wonderful institutions of friendship and nourishment. If you know seniors who need to be included please contact the nearest one and make arrangement for them to be involved.

I had a short visit on grand opening day with Mrs. Evie Mae Boatwright who comes to the center through the van pick up program. She is an amazing 94 years old!

Now folks go on out there and volunteer for something.

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**Part of the large crowd that were in attendance at the opening of the new Batesburg-**

**Leesville Senior Center. The event drew more than a 100 people.**



**The main entrance of the new Batesburg-Leesville Senior Center. Behind the podium**

**the traditional ribbon can be seen. Long time members of the Center cut the ribbon.**